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# PUBLIC HEALTH REPORTS

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## TYPHUS FEVER.

Since November 19, 1913, 19 cases of typhus fever have been discovered in immigrants arriving at Atlantic ports from Europe. Seven of these cases arrived at Providence from Marseille and Naples and 12 at New York quarantine, mainly from southern European ports.

Within recent years it has been demonstrated that typhus fever is spread from man to man by the body louse and that apparently this is the only way in which it is spread. This makes the control of the disease comparatively simple when it exists in small foci, and its control even in large outbreaks has been rendered not difficult.

During the latter part of February of this year typhus fever became epidemic in Tokyo, Japan, and from March 20 to April 5 there have been notified 1,750 cases. Epidemics of this size have been exceedingly rare during recent years. In the Tokyo outbreak the fatality rate has been reported to be approximately 12 per cent. This is of interest as showing the variations in the virulence of the disease. Higher fatality rates have been given in times past, also much lower fatality rates, an illustration of the latter being the absence of fatality in the type which has been present to a limited extent in New York City and undoubtedly in other American cities for a number of years. Reference is made to what is known as Brill's disease, but which is without doubt typhus fever.

Immediately upon the onset of the outbreak in Tokyo the Public Health Service officer stationed there, in cooperation with the American consul, put into operation the United States quarantine regulations as they related to ships clearing and passengers embarking for United States ports. Passengers from infected territory are detained, bathed, and their clothing disinfected. It is possible that occasional cases of the disease may arrive at Pacific ports in spite of these precautions, and they should be watched for.

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## SHIP RATS AND PLAGUE.

Since it has been definitely determined that plague is spread by fleas and that the fleas are carried from place to place by rodents, the question of the ridding of ships of rats has become one of para-